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S E C R E T PARIS 000630

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [ETTC](#) [CH](#) [FR](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: EU CHINA ARMS EMBARGO: FRENCH TELL JAPANESE EU
READY TO LIFT IN MARCH

REF: A. LUXEMBOURG 70

[B](#). PARIS 547

[C](#). STATE 17707

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (S) Japanese political Officer Korehito Masuda (strictly protect) told poloff that during a Jan. 31 Paris meeting between GOF MFA Deputy Vice Minister for Foreign Policy Tsuneo Nishida and Presidency Diplomatic Advisor Maurice

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Gourdault-Montagne, Gourdault-Montagne said that the EU intends to lift the China arms embargo sometime in March, possibly the 22nd or 23rd (dates for the March European Summit). According to Masuda, Gourdault-Montagne evinced great surprise when Nishida told him that lifting the embargo would damage French-Japanese relations. Masuda said the French seem to believe that the Japanese are less concerned than previously about any lifting of the embargo. He rued Prime Minister Koizumi's statement to President Chirac during the October EU-ASEM summit in Hanoi, when Chirac asked Koizumi about lifting the embargo. Koizumi had noted that the Japanese hoped that the EU would consider the measure "with prudence." Masuda feared that Koizumi's less-than-forceful response had given Chirac the impression that the Japanese would not protest too vigorously against a lifting.

[2](#). (S) Masuda also pointed out the difficulties that such a date would cause, given plans for President Chirac to visit Japan in late March. He found it inconceivable that the French could consider pressing the EU to lift the embargo on the eve of a long-planned visit.

[3](#). (S) Echoing questions posed in Ref (A), Masuda also sought to know whether the US position against the embargo remains firm, noting concerns driven by press reporting that perhaps the US has accepted the eventuality of a lift and is seeking to minimize the damage. Poloff noted that US position remains strongly against any lifting.

[4](#). (S) Masuda also noted that during discussions between the Japanese Ambassador in Paris and the French MFA to discuss the embargo, (outgoing) Asia Chief Thierry Dana and DAS-equivalent for East Asia Marc Abensour frequently attempt to paint the United States as the country most eager to exploit the market for arms sales to China.

[5](#). (S) A March date fits in with MFA DAS-equivalent for export control Jacques Maillard's previous comments to us that they expected the EU to lift the embargo within the first trimester of 2005 and with MFA DAS-equivalent for CFSP LeDeunff's remarks prior to the Jan 31 GAERC (ref B) that there would be no movement on the embargo prior to President Bush's February visit to Europe.
Leach